



MSDE BULLETIN

Vol. 12, No. 13 -- November 14, 2001

STATE SUPERINTENDENT EXTENDS VERIFICATION PROCESS FOR 2001 MSPAP

State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick announced last week that she will take more time to verify the 2001 results of the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) before releasing them after the first of the year.

State testing officials, concerned with unusual patterns found in early, unverified school level test results, have asked two widely known testing experts to help with a reexamination of the 2001 results before publicly releasing the data.

Dr. Brian Gong and Dr. Richard Hill of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc., aim to complete a short-term study by early January. The National Center is a non-profit research organization that has worked with several states on assessment issues over the past five years. Both researchers are best known for their work in the early 1990s with Kentucky's state school assessment system.

“The integrity of the process depends on our having the utmost of confidence in the 2001 MSPAP results. Each year, we go through a series of data checks all the way through to the school level before we finalize figures. This year we are taking additional steps to verify results after finding some unusual patterns, which merit another look,” State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick said.

The State Superintendent called for simultaneous work in three areas prior to making any decisions on the release of 2001 test data. The three activities include:

- **The study of the 2001 administration by the National Center for Educational Assessment.** The researchers will study the scoring and statistics used to analyze and

report the results of the 2001 test administration process. Montgomery, Harford, Kent, and Cecil Counties will partner with the state on the assessment study.

- **A reexamination of the data by the two contractors who work with the testing program for Maryland (CTB/McGraw-Hill and Measurement Incorporated).** Maryland is one of the few states with error free reporting to date and also one of the few states in which the State's teachers both write test items and score them with the assistance of test contractors.
- **Collaboration with local school systems to do an analysis of student work.**

MSPAP results, usually released in late November or early December each year, were originally scheduled for release on Nov. 27. The release of the results will be delayed until after the first of the year, pending the outcome of the new studies. ■

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK BEING COMBINED WITH “LESSONS OF LIBERTY”

President Bush, along with other federal officials, is encouraging schools to combine this year's celebration of American Education Week with an initiative honoring the service of American veterans.

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi have joined the President in launching “Lessons of Liberty,” designed to bring America's veterans and students together in the classroom.

As part of the celebration, Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick welcomed a veteran, George Grossnickle, as her special guest in her school visit to Sparrows Point Middle/High School on Nov. 13. Dr. Grasmick also appeared at Edgemere Elementary.

American Education Week, Nov. 11-17, also has been proclaimed “National Veterans Awareness Week,” by President Bush. He is asking schools to involve veterans in celebration events planned for the week.

Assistant Education Secretary Laurie Rich, in a memo sent to MSDE, said “Interacting with men and women who have fought on the battlefields of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Persian Gulf will give students a better understanding of the sacrifices our armed forces are making today.”

Dr. Grasmick spoke with middle schoolers, 9th and 11th graders in her visit to Sparrows Point. Afterwards, she visited with a Pre-K class at Edgemere Elementary, whose students had constructed a special American flag with their handprints serving as stars. Other Edgemere students interviewed Dr. Grasmick for a special unit they are completing on biographies. ■

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS RECEIVE FUNDS TO MEET PROGRAM STANDARDS

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has issued 14 new grants to child care providers to allow them to complete national or state program accreditation.

Since last year, MSDE has issued a total of 58 grants, ranging from \$7,000 to \$25,000 per year and impacting more than 200 center-based child care, family child care or Head Start programs. The purpose of these funds is to provide financial resources to state licensed or registered child care providers to complete national program accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) Commission. Providers also can initiate MSDE's early childhood accreditation process using the MSDE *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs*.

The grants are part of the Judith P. Hoyer Early Care and Education Enhancement Program, administered by the MSDE, named after the late Judy Hoyer, former Early Childhood Supervisor for the Prince George's County Public Schools. The grants are designed to support providers to provide standards-based, high quality early childhood education. It is part of a larger effort by the General Assembly to improve school readiness among young children.

The latest grant recipients are: The Learning Tree Child Development Center and Kids' Farm from Anne Arundel County; St. Jerome's, St. Veronica's, and Herring Run Head Start programs as well as the child care center at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore City; and United Way of Calvert County. New Horizon – Bryons Road in Charles County, and Kiddie Academy of Oxon Hill, Prince George's County.

Childtime Children's Center and K.A.C. Enterprises at the Goddard School, both in Howard County; and Ashburton/Wyngate Children's Center of Bethesda, in Montgomery County received grants. On the Eastern Shore, grants were received by the Kent Day Care Center and the Child Care Resource Center at Chesapeake College. Among the Child Care Resource Centers, the Baltimore County Child Care Links, Montgomery County Child Care Resource Center, and Washington County Resources for Children and Families received funds to mentor family child care providers to become accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

The programs receive technical support from MSDE's Early Childhood Accreditation Project, including orientation to standards for early childhood education, designated

mentoring, and technical assistance in completing the self-appraisal and validation process.

On October 23, 2001, MSDE issued another solicitation for providers to submit applications under this program. Due date for the applications is November 30, 2001. Please call Joyce Nixon, Facilitator, Early Childhood Accreditation Project, at 410-767-4441 or jnixon1@msde.state.md.us. ■

PORT DISCOVERY ANNOUNCES SPECIAL OFFER FOR MARYLAND SCHOOLS

Port Discovery has a limited-time offer open to Maryland schools that can fit in a quick field trip before January 31, 2002.

The Baltimore children's museum is offering structured field trips to classes free-of-charge, thanks to special grant funding. These field trips are designed to speak directly to standards associated with teaching and testing statewide.

Programs are listed by grade levels and teachers can tailor their visits by choosing programs that correlate with their curriculum. These challenging activities encourage children to problem solve in-group activities as they interact with the environment.

Challenging and engaging programs include such activities as:

- Groups of children are given masking tape and newspaper, and are told to create a water tower. Groups then test and compare the results of their construction with other groups.
- Children tape their own public service announcements at Port Discovery's realistic Maryland Public Television studio.

Time – and space in the free ticket program – is running out, however. For information and reservations, call group reservations, 410-864-2666 (press 1). Or e-mail at

kgulick@portdiscovery.org. ■

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